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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 004217

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD
USAID/ANE/MEA
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
PARIS FOR O'FRIEL
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NICOSIA FOR ILMG
STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JORDAN: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ AND T OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

JORDANIAN DAILIES ON JULY 30 WERE DOMINATED BY KING
ABDULLAH'S INTERVIEW WITH THE TIMES AND HIS MEETING
WITH PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR, IN WHICH HE COMMENTED ON
IRAQ AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

EDITORIAL WRITERS COMMENTED ON A NUMBER OF DOMESTIC
ISSUES. THE MOST IMPORTANT THEME WAS PRAISE FOR THE
KING'S STATEMENTS ON IRAQ.

NEWS REPORTS

JORDANIAN DAILIES ON JULY 30 WERE DOMINATED BY KING
ABDULLAH'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OF BRITAIN
AND HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE TIMES, IN WHICH HE ADDRESSED
THE SITUATION IN IRAQ AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.
DAILIES HIGHLIGHTED THE FOLLOWING QUOTES:
PRINCE HASSAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE IRAQI OPPOSITION
MEETING WAS A GROSS ERROR, AND WE ARE WORKING TO
RECTIFY THE SITUATION.
JORDAN WOULD NOT BE THE LAUNCHING GROUND FOR ANY
AMERICAN OPERATIONS.
IT IS INAPPROPRIATE TO TARGET THE LEADERSHIP OF ANY
COUNTRY.
JORDAN WARNS AGAINST A HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE IN THE
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND AGAINST ATTACKING IRAQ.
SECRETARY POWELL UNDERSTANDS THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM

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AND HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE A
MAJOR LOSS.
[AHMAD] JALABI IS WANTED IN JORDAN FOR EMBEZZLING FUNDS
FROM A JORDANIAN BANK.

DAILIES ALSO REPORTED THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE THAT
SPOKE OF AN AMERICAN PLAN TO STRIKE BAGHDAD FIRST.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES

-- THE KING'S ANSWERS

DAILY COLUMNIST BASSEM SAKAJHA WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT,
INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON JULY 30:
"JORDAN'S POSITION REGARDING REGIONAL ISSUES NEEDS TO
BE THE CLEARER, AND IT APPEARS THAT THE KING, IN HIS
CNN INTERVIEW, ADDRESSED EACH OF THE TRIAL BALLOONS
RECENTLY LAUNCHED REGARDING A JORDANIAN ROLE IN THE
PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND ANOTHER IN A U.S. AGGRESSION
AGAINST IRAQ. DESPITE ENORMOUS PRESSURE THAT STARTED
WITH LEAKS TO THE MEDIA AND REACHED THE LEVEL OF
HINTING AT A NEW SIEGE OF AQABA, THE ROYAL POSITION IS
CLEAR AND FORTHRIGHT. ALL JORDANIANS FEEL PROUD OF THE
KING WHO SPOKE IN THEIR NAMES, AND THAT THEIR COUNTRY
WOULD NOT BE DRAGGED INTO A GAME THAT THEY WOULD NOT
ACCEPT, AND THAT IS OPPOSED TO THEIR NATIONALIST
OUTLOOKS."

-- THE KING'S INTERVIEW WITH CNN

DAILY COLUMNIST MAZEN AL-SAKET WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT,
INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON JULY 30: "IT IS
OUR DUTY TO TAKE NOTE OF THE FORTHRIGHTNESS AND CLARITY
WITH WHICH THE KING EXPRESSED HIMSELF ON THE TWO MOST
IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT OCCUPY JORDANIAN PUBLIC OPINION.
THESE ISSUES REPRESENT JORDAN'S NATIONALIST OUTLOOK
REGARDING THE CHALLENGES THAT FACE OUR NATION AND THAT
THREATEN THE REGION'S SECURITY AND STABILITY. ONLY
THIS POSITION THAT EXPRESSES JORDAN'S POPULAR AS WELL
AS OFFICIAL VIEWPOINTS CAN MAKE US FACE THESE
CHALLENGES AND DANGERS SUCCESSFULLY."

-- HAS JORDANIAN DIPLOMACY MENDED THE DAMAGE DONE BY
THE PRINCE'S PARTICIPATION [IN ET IRAQI OPPOSITION
MEETING]?
IMPORTANT COLUMNIST SAMIH AL-MA'AYTAH WROTE IN SEMI-

OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON JULY 30:
"HIS MAJESTY THE KING SPOKE ACCURATELY WHEN HE
DESCRIBED THE PRINCE'S MOVE AS A GROSS ERROR BECAUSE
THAT STEP CAUSED CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL DAMAGE TO
JORDAN AND ITS LEADERSHIP FAR BEYOND THE PRINCE'S
JUSTIFICATION THAT IT WAS A PERSONAL DECISION. THE
PRINCE FORGOT THAT HIS MOVE WAS CONSIDERED AS COMING
FROM THE JORDANIAN LEADERSHIP, WHICH NEEDED TO EXERT
CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO PERSUADE FRIENDS AND BROTHERS
THAT IT WAS NOT A PARTNER IN THIS POLITICAL STEP. ALL
ARABS SHOULD REALIZE THAT THEY WILL BE SUBJECTED TO
CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO TAKE PART IN THE AGGRESSION
AGAINST IRAQ, AND THAT THE PROPER NATIONALIST POSITION
WOULD BE IN A COLLECTIVE STAND TO RESIST THESE
PRESSURES. WE HOPE THAT WE SHALL SEE SUCH A COLLECTIVE
STAND INSTEAD OF THE USUAL ARAB BEHAVIOR OF SNEAKING TO
THE AMERICANS INDIVIDUALLY AND IN SECRET." GNEHM